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MARVIN KALB: Forty-eight hours from now, President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev will open the first U.S.-Soviet summit in more than six years. Their agenda is crowded with complicated problems. Bilateral relations: A new cultural exchange agreement may be signed. Geographical trouble spots, such as Afghanistan and Nicaragua. Human rights violations. And perhaps most important of all, the continuing nuclear arms race. No major breakthrough of any kind is expected at this time. So, why this summit, and what are its prospects?

He have an interesting cross-section of guests, American, Soviet, European, here to shed some light on different aspects of this summit: Michael Deaver, who comes to us live from Phoenix, has packaged and polished the President's image for many years, in the White House till last spring, now as an adviser on summit preparations. Julien Semyonov (?), one of the Soviet Union's most popular novelists, but for this summit a member of the Soviet delegation and adviser to Gorbachev. Semyonov has often been compared to Norman Mailer. Helmut Schmidt, former Chancellor of West Germany, who comes to us live from Hamburg, his home town. Few West Europeans are better able to judge the impact of the summit blitz on the chances for a more stable East-West relationship. Senator Sam Nunn, the Democrat from Georgia, who comes to us from Washington, D.C. Nunn, a leading Democratic expert on defense, is one of the handful of U.S. Senators who's alreaady met Gorbachev. Dr. Roald Sagdeev, who is here with us in Geneva, is Director of the Soviet Institute for Space Research, a leading member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, also an adviser to Gorbachev. And also here in Geneva, Robert McFarlane, the President's National Security Adviser. At the White House, along with Chief of Staff Donald Regan, he has chaired the key committee preparing the President

for the summit.

Joining me for this series of interviews are my colleagues Tom Brokaw, the anchorman for NBC Nightly News, and John Chancellor, the senior commentator for NBC, both veterans of earlier summits.

First, let's get the latest on the two main characters at this summit, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. Chris Wallace covers President Reagan for NBC News.

Chris?

CHRIS WALLACE: Marvin, Ronald Reagan's first day in Geneva was spent meeting with advisers and resting, mostly resting. But whatever they did today, the President and his men couldn't get away from the Weinberger letter, hard-line advice to Mr. Reagan that was leaked to several newspapers.

This morning Mr. Reagan left the Eighteenth Century mansion where he is staying and went to a half-hour meeting with top advisers. Those advisers were trying to play down the Weinberger flap, saying it's the President, not the Secretary of Defense, who sets policy.

Mr. Reagan denied an aide's charge yesterday that someone was trying to sabotage the summit.

REPORTER: Are you going to fire Weinberger?

PRESIDENT REAGAN: Do you want a two-word answer or one?

REPORTER: Two.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: Hell no.

WALLACE: Inside the meeting, the President seemed even more upset about the summit being upstaged, especially when asked about that official who cried sabotage.

PRESIDENT REAGAN: I'm wondering if that individual is not the figment of someone in the press's imagination.

WALLACE: With the unpleasant questions out of the way, the Reagans walked in the elaborate garden of their residence. And later the President inspected the mansion where he will meet Gorbachev for the first time Tuesday.

But the Weinberger letter would not go away. A top Soviet official, Georgi Arbatov, said Weinberger's hard-line advice not to reaffirm the SALT II and ABM treaties at the summit

was an attempt to torpedo arms control.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes tried again to play the issue down.

LARRY SPEAKES: I'd be willing to put five bucks right here that General Secretary Gorbachev will not say, "What about the Weinberger letter?"

WALLACE: Gorbachev may not mention the letter, and the President may keep trying to play it down, but it looks like Weinberger's hard-line advice may carry the day. U.S. officials now say that there is no reason to reaffirm the SALT II and ABM treaties at this summit.

KALB: Thank you, Chris.

Now to Steve Hurst, NBC's Moscow correspondent, who has just come into Geneva, who is standing by at a press center.

Steve?

STEVE HURST: Marvin, Mr. Gorbachev may not mention the letter, but he certainly was sitting in his office today relishing it. It plays right into Soviet hands. It allows him to say, "You see, we were right all along. The Americans don't want arms control, don't want to live by past agreements or negotiate new ones."

And it, as Chris reported, lent ammo for Mr. Arbatov in his briefing this morning.

The brouhaha broke out much too late to be in the Soviet press this morning, but they were still full of attacks on the Reagan Administration, across the board, and focused on Star Wars. And you can be sure that when the papers hit the streets tomorrow, they will be full of the Weinberger letter.

KALB: Thank you very much, Steve.

We'll begin our interviews with Michael Deaver, the man who spins presidential images, when Meet the Press returns from Geneva right after these messages.

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KALB: Perhaps because the last U.S.-Soviet summit took place more than six years ago, this one is being ballyhooed by one Soviet official as the most important summit in history, and by a string of American officials seeking lower expectations as nothing more than very important.

On both sides, the buildup has been a classic study in public diplomacy, what in less polite times was called propaganda. Gorbachev quickly demonstrated in a Time magazine interview that he is up to the challenge; in a series of Kremlin meetings that he is a formidable adversary, sharp, intelligent, combative; in a visit Paris that he is at home with a hundred inquiring lenses, selling, always selling his vision of the future.

President Reagan, for his part, has not been sitting at home knitting. He journeyed to the United Nations, where he unveiled a new proposal to cool global trouble spots, and conferred with his major allies. He gave one interview after another, a panel of Soviet journalists among them. And his top advisers, Shultz, McFarlane, Nitze, briefed reporters on every aspect of the summit, leaving little to the imagination.

Welcome to Meet the Press, Mr. Deaver. It's an old saying in diplomacy that if it's not secret, it can't be terribly important, it can't be terribly substantive. Well, in the last month of preparation for this summit, there really hasn't been terribly much that is secret, including the leaking just a couple of days ago of the Weinberger letter.

Can you tell us, in your view, whether the President is deeply upset by the leaking of that letter?

MICHAEL DEAVER: I have no way to know. I haven't seen him since before he left. So all I have are the accounts, like all the rest of us, of reading it in the newspaper.

KALB: Do you think it could upset the President's timing, his preparation for the summit?

DEAVER: No, I don't think so. I think the President obviously is upset by any kind of leakage of confidential information, particularly a private letter. But I don't think this will later one way or the other the President's attitudes or desires going into the summit.

JOHN CHANCELLOR: Mr. Deaver, you've been advising the President leading up to the summit. Is there something different about this one? The White House talks about fundamental differences. Can you describe the way that this summit might work the way past summits haven't?

DEAVER: Well, really, this is -- you know, so much of any summit is the chemistry of the two men. So it's very hard to compare this summit with any other summit. You've got the chemistry of two new fellows on the block. And after all the ballyhoo and the public relations and the speculation by the

media, it really boils down to what happens when the two of them get behind those two doors and the doors shut.

CHANCELLOR: Yeah. But with all respect, they're not going on a date. They're representing countries with hundreds of advisers who have policies and plans and programs and proposals and all of that. I must say that when you do hear what the White House is talking about, the chemistry of the two men, where's the substance in all this?

DEAVER: Well, there's no question there's a good deal of substance in all of this. And I can only talk from the American side and tell you that I believe that Ronald Reagan has been preparing for this meeting for a decade or more. It isn't just the preparation and cramming that has come in the last three or four weeks. This man wants the meeting, has always wanted this meeting, and is readying up for it.

TOM BROKAW: Mr. Deaver, the President has a long and well-publicized record of a personal disdain and suspicion of the Soviets and their system. And yet, as I understand it, he's going to attempt to persuade Gorbachev that the United States, and he personally, is not hostile to the Soviets. Do you think that he personally can rewrite his own history?

DEAVER: Oh, I wouldn't sell Ronald Reagan short on being persuasive on any subject with anybody. And I think he feels very secure in his ability to be persuasive and communicate his real feelings to this Soviet leader.

BROKAW: But the Russians generally, and Gorbachev particularly, have always made it clear that they look after their own national interest. It was just about a year ago that Gorbachev was saying that great powers don't have allies, they have national interests. And isn't that what he's going to be looking to, as the President will be as well?

DEAVER: Well, I suppose so. I think that is one of the great differences between the two men. If Mr. Gorbachev said the great powers don't have allies, that simply isn't true with the West. We have the strongest alliance we've had in 20 years with this President going into this summit.

So, we'll just have to wait and see.

KALB: Mr. Deaver, did the President get prepped for this summit in much the same way that he got prepped, for example, for a presidential debate?

DEAVER: No. No, he didn't. And really, there wasn't the need for the kind of preparation that you need for a stand-up debate, where all kinds of questions come from all different

kinds of people. As I said before, the President has been preparing for this meeting for a long time and he's had daily briefings and discussions and meetings for 4 1/2 years on this subject. There hasn't been a subject that's more important to him.

So, it didn't take a great deal of cramming to go into this summit.

KALB: Mr. Deaver, if he was preparing for this meeting for ten years, why did it take him 4 1/2 years to get to it?

DEAVER: Well, I think you might have to ask the Soviet leadership that. Ronald Reagan was willing from the very first time he came into office, in fact wrote Brezhnev when he was in the hospital after he was shot suggesting such a meeting, and has been willing and has suggested that with every Soviet leader that he's served opposite with.

So, I can't answer that. Ronald Reagan's been willing to go any place to have any kind of a meeting with the Soviet leaders since he took office.

KALB: Okay, Mr. Deaver. Thank you very much.

There is, naturally, another side to this story of public diplomacy. It is the Soviet side. We're delighted to have Julien Semyonov with us. He is one of the Soviet Union's most popular novelists. But at this summit he's a member of the Gorbachev team.

So, Mr. Semyonov, I want to begin with a very obvious question. You are a novelist. You're a very good one. What are you doing here performing as a diplomat?

JULIEN SEMYONOV: Well, I'd say so. I'm here for some reasons. First, I have a teacher in literature. He's American. His name, Ernest Hemingway. And he visited [unintelligible] in '21, when [unintelligible], our Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Germany [unintelligible] signed a peaceful agreement, first.

Second one, I am not a politician, I'm a writer, thank God. That's why. I am more emotional than politicians. And you know, writers' emotions, they are greater than other emotions and nearby women's emotions. That's why it's possible for me to analyze situation from side. You see, I'm absolutely open-minded.

Third one, I'm going -- well, I'm going later to write a book. And, of course, because I do very like my leader, and I'm sure that this summit, it's the only chance to preserve ourself,

to save civilization, that's why I'm here.

BROKAW: Mr. Semyonov, as a writer, you must have a very fundamental understanding of fundamental human rights.

SEMYONOV: Don't like machine gun. Slowly, please.

BROKAW: All right. Yeah. No machine gun. One at a time.

SEMYONOV: Yeah, good.

BROKAW: As a writer, you have a fundamental understanding, I would think, of fundamental human rights. One of the great puzzles in our country is why in your system the people who want to leave the Soviet Union just aren't free to do so when they want to go.

SEMYONOV: Well, it's a special theme for discussion. How many minutes I do have?

[Confusion of voices]

SEMYONOV: I'll answer you this question. Tomorrow we'll have a press conference about this subject in press center of Geneva. But, you know, you know, there's a lot of speculation about the subject. And today, if you'd been in press center, you saw this scandal when one woman -- I do not know here -- began to cry, and so on and so on. It's another part of diplomacy, you know. It's a kind of provocation.

CHANCELLOR: Mr. Semyonov, let me ask you one brief question, as one journalist writer to a literary writer. Why should we trust the Russians? Why should we trust the Soviet regime?

SEMYONOV: Well, okay. Because we were allies during our war against Nazi. It's for remaining govern -- we were alliance. Before that, we had Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who is very popular in my country.

Third reason. Because most popular Soviet writers is Ernest Hemingway, Faulker, Gore Vidal, and so on and so on. And Russian like Americans, you know, as well.

KALB: I have to break in. I want to thank you for being with us, and I appreciate the time that you've taken.

If one of the main targets for all of this public diplomacy has been opinion in Western Europe, let us now turn to one of the foremost statesmen of Western Europe, Helmut Schmidt,

the former Chancellor of West Germany, former Finance Minister, Defense Minister, and ask for his opinion.

Mr. Schmidt, I'd like to ask you your opinion of the whole impact of this public diplomacy. Is it viewed with seriousness in Western Europe?

HELMUT SCHMIDT: Well, it seems to me that so far there has been too much publicity, too much propaganda, public attacks and condemnations on each other, which makes it rather difficult to reach prudent compromises. Less spectacular media warfare would be advantageous to the probability of positive results of the meeting.

From a European point of view, it's high time that the two leaders get together. And the least that the Europeans are entitled to ask for is that the two superpowers do obey the treaties that they have undertaken -- namely, in the first place, the nonproliferation treaty, where in Article 36 the two superpowers have undertaken to diminish their nuclear arsenals, which they haven't done so far; and, secondly, the anti-ballistic missile treaty, where you nowadays have divergencies in interpretation of the treaty, divergencies between Moscow and Washington, but even inside Washington, as it seems to appear.

Secondly, the European interests, of course, have to be taken care of in these negotiations. And there are some differences of interest between the European powers. You have the nuclear powers, like France and Britain, and then you have the great majorities of non-nuclear European states. And it is not going to be easy for President Reagan to pursue the American interest, as well as these differing European interests.

BROKAW: Mr. Schmidt, as you know, Defense Secretary Weinberger has advised the President not to extend the SALT II agreement and to be very careful about any changes in the ABM treaty that would not let the Administration go forward with research on SDI. Do you think it would be a good idea for the President not to agree on extension of the ABM treaty, and also of the 1972 SALT treaty?

SCHMIDT: Well, I think that these treaties, so far, have been the pillars on which the whole enterprise of limiting the nuclear arms race and eventually stopping the arms race has been based upon. It would be very dangerous to let these treaties, especially the nonproliferation treaty and the ABM treaty, elapse or let them decay.

I think what is necessary is a joint interpretation in order to avoid the mutual accusations which have been hearing. The Americans have accused the Russians of violating the ABM

treaty. The Russians do accuse the Americans of having the intention to violate the treaty. I think a joint interpretation is what the world does need in this field.

And, of course, the treaty is rather to be amended than to let it decay.

CHANCELLOR: Herr Schmidt, if the summit at Geneva should break down and no progress is made here, some of us believe it is likely that the Soviets will mount an intensified public relations political campaign in Western Europe and Japan, trying to make their point in Japan and Western Europe, a point that they might not have been able to make to the Americans here.

If they did that, how well would they do, sir?

SCHMIDT: I do not think that it is very likely that we see a breakdown of the negotiations in Geneva. I think the full impact of this meeting between the two heads of state, or heads of the party and the head of state, the full impact will only be seen in the later course of January, once the two arms limitation delegations get together again in Geneva. I think this will be after the 15th of January. And whether they agree on something new at the present summit meeting or not, they will certainly have to make it appear as being a meeting that has contributed to further progress in the field of arms limitation.

A breakdown, of course, would be a disaster. And not only for the two superpowers and their population, but also of course for the Europeans. In case of a breakdown, it would of course be of enormous importance as regards the question who is responsible for the breakdown.

But I would like to repeat, I do not calculate with a breakdown. I think they have both too big interests at stake, and that they will avoid a breakdown.

KALB: Mr. Schmidt, in the 30 seconds that we have left for this part of the interview, could you tell us whether you believe that President Reagan should make some major compromise on strategic defense in order to get a major agreement?

SCHMIDT: I think both sides have to make compromises, both sides have to be willing for compromise, and both sides should make the compromises within the framework of the existing treaty, which covers SDI as much as any other method of shooting down the adversary's missiles.

KALB: Mr. Schmidt, thank you very much for being our guest.

In a moment, we'll focus on the key problem of arms

control with Senator Sam Nunn and Dr. Roald Sagdeev, and then later in the program with Robert McFarlane, the President's National Security Adviser.

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KALB: Call it what you will, the Strategic Defense Initiative, SDI, Star Wars, it has become the central point of contention here in Geneva, one way of measuring whatever success could be achieved at this summit.

Throughout the tumultuous Seventies, the Soviet Union pursued a two-track policy: signing arms control agreements at a succession of summits, while building up a significant force of long-range offensive missiles, some of them on display only last week at the Red Square celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The Soviet buildup challenged America's strategic lead, persuading the Reagan Administration to pump billions into a new rearmament program and to go one step beyond that and test the President's concept of creating a space shield against incoming Soviet warheads.

Gorbachev saw Star Wars as a slick way for the U.S. to gain a first-strike advantage, and he demanded in a hundred different ways that this program be stopped as his price for a new arms control agreement, a demand the President has rejected.

It is now time for Senator Sam Nunn in Washington and Dr. Roald Sagdeev here in Geneva. Let's start with Senator Nunn.

Senator Nunn, do you think that the leaking of that Weinberger letter is going to complicate the President's efforts here at the summit?

SENATOR SAM NUNN: Well, I see that letter as like the thirteenth chime of a clock. It not only is a bizarre sound coming at this point, but it also casts considerable doubt on everything else emanating from that source. I think the intention of the leak probably was to reduce the President's flexibility. I think the result of the leak has been very damaging because it feeds right into the Soviet propaganda machine.

CHANCELLOR: Senator, let me ask you about the overall negotiations here. The Soviets have made quite an offer. Some people are saying it's the most forthcoming offer on arms control the Soviet Union has ever made. It involves a wide range of weapons.

Shouldn't we, in the face of this offer, be a little more flexible on the Strategic Defense Initiative, on Star Wars?

What's your view?

SENATOR NUNN: I think both sides have to be more flexible on defense. I think we have to have offensive and defensive discussions together. Certainly the offensive progress will affect, or should affect, our defensive plans. Because if we can get the Soviets to cut back very substantially on their large MIRVed ICBMs, it certainly will affect our defensive needs and plans.

The Soviets have been very rigid in interpreting the ABM treaty very narrowly for their own purposes. And we've gone in the opposite direction. The logical point for both sides is to interpret the ABM treaty as it was originally intended by the parties.

BROKAW: Senator, I was just going to ask whether you think that we ought to have an extension of the SALT II, which lapses at the end of this year, and whether there ought to be a common agreement on the interpretation of the ABM treaty.

SENATOR NUNN: Well, on the latter point, definitely. If the two sides could instruct the negotiators in Geneva to search for a common interpretation of the ABM treaty, I think it would be a very substantial and positive gain at the summit.

On the question of SALT II extension, the President really has already made that decision. He made it in the summer. Now, that does not mean it's going to be extended for a long time. But that was the strange thing about the Weinberger letter, to me, because he was rehashing arguments that the Pentagon, or at least the Secretary of Defense, lost in the summer debate. The question is whether we extend it through '86 and '87. The argument in that Weinberger letter was the damage that would be done if we extended it through 1991. And no one's even talking about that.

BROKAW: Dr. Sagdeev, is that a good idea, for the negotiators here in Geneva to agree on a common interpretation of ABM?

ROALD SAGDEEV: Yes, that would be very good idea. And I think it would be very good to come back to the original period of that treaty, because, thank God, we can benefit from the people who really invented this treaty.

CHANCELLOR: But Dr. Sagdeev, the Soviet Union, in the view of many people, not just Americans, has violated the treaty itself. And I refer to the big phased-array radar at Krasnoyarsk in the Soviet Union, which seems to be in violation of the treaty.

SAGDEEV: Let me give as an answer a few lines. First of all, what is seen now from the space, it's just a very large part of concrete, which could be interpreted as a future phased-array radar, maybe from five or six years from now. And this type of technology also could be used for peaceful purposes. We are having now very heavy traffic in the orbits, a lot of satellites. So why not produce a spin-off from military to civilian space area?

BROKAW: Dr. Sagdeev, do you think that the President's idea of switching from a nuclear equation that relies on offensive weapons to defensive systems is a good idea?

SAGDEEV: Well, personally, I have spent a lot of my time during last several years, and it is my very deep personal belief that it is not so.

KALB: Dr. Sagdeev, is there any room for compromise, in your view, in the view of the other members of the Soviet delegation, on the issue of Star Wars? In other words, would you agree to some kind of deal struck here in Geneva according to which the United States could continue to test those weapons systems now being tested and put a cap on new weapons systems to be tested?

SAGDEEV: This is a very complicated issue, if you would like to go into the details. So...

KALB: We don't have time for too many of the details, but if you could...

SAGDEEV: I think it would be very bad for all of us, not only for Russians, for Americans also, and for rest of the world, to compromise on the extent of common security.

CHANCELLOR: Dr. Sagdeev, the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London, which is an independent, if Western, study group, says that the Soviet Union has an active strategic defense program that's ongoing. Can you tell the American people on this program what that consists of? You people say it's not threatening. But what does it consist of?

SAGDEEV: What's really going on is a continuation of activity completely under the umbrella of formal ABM treaty, which means defense, anti-ballistic defense of the local area which was specified in that agreement.

CHANCELLOR: Would that be directed-energy weapons or kinetic-energy weapons involved in that?

SAGDEEV: It is based on kinetic energy, on the interceptors, rocket interceptors.

CHANCELLOR: From the ground or in the air?

SAGDEEV: From the ground.

KALB: Dr. Sagdeev, Mr. McFarlane, who will be on this program very shortly, says that the Soviet Union has the most advanced Star Wars/SDI program in the entire world. Now, you're there in the midst of that. Is he expressing what is true?

SAGDEEV: You know, usually I am following what my colleagues, scientists, are saying. So I would like to refer to, at this particular time, the reference to the statement from George Keyworth, who is, as I understand, the chief scientific counselor to the government. He said that...

CHANCELLOR: That's George Keyworth, the President's adviser.

SAGDEEV: Yes.

BROKAW: In the United States. Right.

SAGDEEV: And he said quite recently -- and I can quote his sayings during several speeches -- that the Russians are far behind Americans in the technology related to SDI area.

CHANCELLOR: Marvin, could I put a question to Senator Nunn?

KALB: Please do.

CHANCELLOR: Senator, if things don't go well here and in the subsequent negotiations in Geneva, and we don't really get an agreement on the terminology of the ABM treaty and on these weapons, what's down the road for both countries?

SENATOR NUNN: Well, I hope that, even though I don't expect a breakthrough at the summit, I hope we don't have a breakdown and I hope that we have modest and useful progress. And I think that is the most likely course.

But if you anticipate a complete breakdown of all negotiations, I think you would have an offensive and defensive race, and it would be more intense than anything we've seen in the past. I think that would be very grave for the world and I think it would have very severe implications on the economic systems of both countries.

KALB: Senator, you have talked to Gorbachev. You're one of the few senators who has. Do you believe that Gorbachev, one, understands that very point you've just made? And do you

feel that he's ready for some kind of major agreement on arms control at this summit?

SENATOR NUNN: Well, I think he's ready for an agreement on his terms. He's going to have to change the Soviet proposals considerably. He's going to have to correct the Soviet violations, like the radar in Central Siberia. He's going to have to go back to the old definitions of what strategic systems are. He's going to have to change the ALCOM (?) limitation. He's got to do a lot of changing. But if he does that, then we've got to be more flexible also, and we've got to have, I think, the kind of timing and sense of timing to take advantage of a considerable opportunity.

We have more leverage now than we've had in the past. And I think both sides have more mutual interest in serious arms control than in the past.

KALB: Gentlemen, we have to move along.

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KALB: We are back on Meet the Press from Geneva with Robert McFarlane, the President's National Security Adviser.

Earlier today you expressed optimism -- and I just want to find out exactly what that expression was aimed at -- at certain issues of a bilateral nature between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. I want to be sure that we understand. You're talking about the strong, what, probability, likelihood of a cultural exchange agreement?

ROBERT MCFARLANE: Marvin, I was referring to President Reagan's feelings of hopefulness and, yes, optimism for progress across the board.

KALB: But you were talking about bilateral relations. And I just want to clear up the specific issues.

MCFARLANE: There has been a measure of progress in recent days on bilateral issues.

KALB: Cultural agreement?

MCFARLANE: Yes.

KALB: Consular agreement?

MCFARLANE: Some.

KALB: Some.

MCFARLANE: Yes.

KALB: And what about the airline agreement, which seemed to hold up the other two at one point a week ago?

MCFARLANE: Again, some modest progress. I am not predicting that there will be final closure on any or all, but we remain hopeful. And I think it's within reach.

KALB: All three of those agreements?

MCFARLANE: If we try hard, I think so.

KALB: And you are trying hard. And the Russians?

MCFARLANE: The Secretary of State, all of us are trying hard.

BROKAW: Mr. McFarlane, there's this continuing flap over Secretary of Defense Weinberger's letter that appeared in both the Washington Post and the New York Times, in which he advised the President not to extend the SALT II treaty beyond December 31st of this year. And he talked about the ABM treaty, not to make any changes in that that would restrict American work on SDI or Star Wars. When a senior Administration official was asked if this was an attempt to sabotage the summit, he responded, "Sure, it was," as I understand it.

Were you that senior Administration official? There's been a lot of speculation about that?

MCFARLANE: There's been a lot of inappropriate emphasis and comment on it, I think, Tom. I'm afraid that it's typical of you all, that you become preoccupied with what is a very transitory issue and miss, in the process, the historical significance of this meeting.

The letter, the report was requested by the President. It is part of many elements that will go into his decision on our policy with regard to the SALT II treaty, and most importantly will be his own reaction, I think, to the discussions that he has here in Geneva with General Secretary Gorbachev.

BROKAW: But with all due respect, sir, if in fact a senior Administration official said that it was an attempt to sabotage the summit by the Defense Secretary of the United States in a letter that appears in public without the President's knowledge beforehand, that's not just us making something of it. That represents, it seems to me, very serious conflict within the Administration.

MCFARLANE: There's absolutely zero conflict on the

commitment of the President and every one of his advisers to deep reductions in offensive nuclear weapons, to making progress in the resolution of regional disputes, to expanding cooperation in bilateral areas, and to making our case on human rights issues. We're here as a team, and there is no one who doesn't feel very strongly in support of the President's position on every one of those issues.

CHANCELLOR: Mr. McFarlane, let me take you to the substance of the negotiations here. Two questions.

One is, are they negotiations in the real sense of the word, or are we doing something at this summit, the Americans and the Soviets, that hasn't been done at summits before?

MCFARLANE: I think we are. If the President is able to persuade Mr. Gorbachev of the deep conviction with which he believes right now, there is the opportunity for setting a course for stable, peaceful discourse on all of the various disagreements we have that this can be a different kind of summit.

It really is 40 years in the making, where we have adopted policies for dealing with the Soviet Union that have been based on assumptions that haven't proven out. Now, on the basis of that history and realism, the President's convinced we can make progress. And he's right.

CHANCELLOR: Is eight hours at the summit enough to do that?

MCFARLANE: Eight hours can enable the two leaders to exchange views on fundamentals and to begin to chart a framework, a progress that must surely continue beyond this meeting. But, yes, it is a very important opportunity to make a beginning. It's not an end, it is a beginning.

CHANCELLOR: It doesn't really sound like a negotiation on specific points.

MCFARLANE: I don't think it will be.

CHANCELLOR: Dotting the i's and crossing the t's. You don't see that.

MCFARLANE: No, I don't think that's what summits are for.

KALB: An awful lot of other summits have been just for that. You, yourself, participated as an aide to Henry Kissinger back in 1972, working on a summit that produced an agreement a day, almost like an apple a day. So summits have been known to do that.

MCFARLANE: Well, I think that summits may again do that. But given the enormous change underway in the Soviet Union in the past four years, it's unrealistic to expect that they would have been ready for that kind of thing. And they haven't been. Only now do you see the General Secretary really able to focus at all on foreign affairs. We welcome that. But it is a beginning.

KALB: Mr. McFarlane, I want to address the possibility that the President and General Secretary Gorbachev may even talk past each other. The Secretary of State, you, at that meeting with Gorbachev ten days or so ago in Moscow, were surprised that Gorbachev placed so much emphasis on the importance of the military-industrial complex in the United States, surprised by what seemed to you to be rather simplistic views of the United States.

How can the President of the United States, in the eight hours that John was referring to a moment ago, turn around in the kind of historic way that you're looking forward to now the views of a man raised in the Soviet system, believing deeply in communism? How is that even possible, remotely so?

MCFARLANE: That's a very good point, Marvin. And that's really at the core of President Reagan's different approach. And that is to acknowledge that there are very profound differences and that they will not change.

However, that's not to say that there isn't a way, acknowledging the differences, to talk to each other about solving them where they hold the potential for violence and confrontation, whether it's in Afghanistan, Southern Africa, Indochina, or on arms control.

So, yes, let's acknowledge the differences. And that is different from ten years ago, where we used to have the rather naive notion that they were changing, that their goals were different, that they were no longer expansionist.

BROKAW: The President has had some strong things to say about the Soviet Union in the past. He's had the support of the American people -- he's won two very large elections in this country, as the President of the United States -- when he has said on the campaign trail and while in office that he believes that communism is in its final days, that it will be relegated to the ash heap of history, that he believes that the Soviet system is the focus of evil in the world.

Has he (A) modified his views at all? And if that is thrown back at him by Gorbachev in this meeting, how will he respond to that?

MCFARLANE: Well, Tom, the President has also always acknowledged that the Soviet Union has great military power and the ability to expand by power, military subversion, if it chooses. And he believes that acknowledging those differences, but at the same time recognizing that we intend to maintain the strength, ourselves, to defend against that effort, and to also say there are areas where we can cooperate to mutual benefit is not incompatible with what he's said before.

President Reagan's concern is that this competition, which we welcome, be a peaceful one. And we can do that.

CHANCELLOR: Mr. McFarlane, let me try a couple of ideas on you. On this program earlier this morning, Helmut Schmidt of West Germany and Sam Nunn of Georgia both said that they thought one useful thing would be for the Soviets and the Americans on a common interpretation of language in the ABM treaty: what does it actually mean? Do you see anything like that coming out of this summit, or anything like that being set in train because of this summit?

MCFARLANE: Well, I think that an important outcome of this meeting could be agreement to sit down and begin seriously to talk about the relationship between offense and defense, and how we can move away from such exclusive reliance on offense and toward greater reliance upon non-nuclear defensive systems.

CHANCELLOR: Could you do that under the aegis of the ABM treaty, or would you have to have separate negotiations?

MCFARLANE: The ABM treaty establishes a framework within which all of our programs are being carried out.

CHANCELLOR: Then is the United States willing to discuss with the Soviet Union the language and terminology of the ABM treaty, specifically?

MCFARLANE: The United States has always been willing to talk about what the ABM treaty authorizes. The Soviet Union has taken a much more expansive view of what it authorizes, from its inception. In their own ratification process, you're familiar, John, with Marshal Grechko's statements that it provides no limitations whatsoever upon research and experimentation of systems that can deal with ballistic missile defense.

CHANCELLOR: I guess what I'm asking, Marvin -- just one last question -- is there a possibility of a working group, or something like that, the two countries getting together on the language of the ABM treaty so that they could come out of it a year from now, say, with an agreed interpretation of what it means?

MCFARLANE: Well, John, well before that, we have to get Soviet serious engagement upon what is the proper relationship between offense and defense. After all, they are the ones that expanded this enormous interest in strategic defense many, many years ago.

We do see, and President Reagan believes strongly, that defense can provide a way to avoid this ever-spiraling expansion of nuclear weapons. And that's what he hopes to persuade the General Secretary of here.

KALB: Mr. McFarlane, at this summit, is the President prepared to say to Gorbachev, yes, the United States is ready to extend the life of the SALT II treaty?

MCFARLANE: The President, in setting our current policy last June, stated that future policy would be based upon Soviet compliance, upon their building programs, upon the pace and quality of how they negotiate in Geneva, and I think, obviously, on the outcome of these sessions. And until all of that is behind us and he's absorbed it, it's premature to judge that.

KALB: Okay. Premature, perhaps. But here's the Defense Secretary laying out in his letter the strongest arguments for not going along with an extension of SALT II; and, in effect, for abrogating the ABM treaty. That is his view, I understand that. It is now a public view.

Do you feel that if the President were to continue with SALT II, that Weinberger could remain in that Cabinet?

MCFARLANE: Marvin, you're really distorting what the Secretary said.

KALB: I don't think so.

MCFARLANE: Well, I think you are.

What the Secretary said was that there have been violations...

KALB: Gross violations.

MCFARLANE: That is true. He was stating an accurate record of the past.

KALB: And he also said that if the United States were to go along with an extension of SALT II, that would inhibit programs that the United States must have. He did say that.

MCFARLANE: All of these possibilities are premised upon Soviet compliance. Now, that is undeniable.

With regard to the ABM treaty, in no sense did he say we should abrogate that treaty. So you're misinterpreting what Secretary Weinberger said.

All of us, the President on down, believe that realism requires you tell it like it is. Don't ignore violations. That is an important element in our policy.

The Soviets should know that agreeing to future START, INF, SALT IIIs will have little effect unless they understand the importance of compliance. And that's an important point to be made.

We're here, the President's here to say, "That's our record. Can't we improve upon it and move toward reductions?"

CHANCELLOR: Mr. McFarlane, it seems to us who've read the various proposals that you could get to a position in negotiating on ICBMs where the American ICBMs would be protected much more than they are now against first strikes and all of that. Isn't it tempting to give a little bit on SDI if you could protect our own missiles more?

MCFARLANE: Well, John, you seem to imply that what has always been the formula for arms control, which is trading offense for offense, isn't a good formula. I think it is. In fact, those weapons exist. SDI doesn't. So let's get busy getting rid of the real clear and present danger and move toward a non-nuclear substitute.

KALB: Mr. McFarlane, thanks very much for being our guest once again on Meet the Press.

MCFARLANE: Glad to be here.

KALB: Tom Brokaw, John Chancellor, and I will be back with some concluding thoughts when Meet the Press returns from Geneva right after these messages.

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KALB: Gentlemen, let's discuss what we've heard. And we've heard a great deal.

I have the impression, listening to Mr. McFarlane and a number of the other people on this program and others here in Geneva, that we are now, all of us, at some kind of a major turning point in arms control. I have heard European academicians say that the era of arms control that began at Glassboro in 1967 is now ending in Geneva in 1985, that some new system for containing weapons or using weapons is going to have to be

devised by the superpowers. And I'm just willing to state right out I have a strong suspicion that Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev do not really know what is going to succeed this particular regimen of arms control. And that's why there is an element of danger that hangs over the entire process.

CHANCELLOR: I think if they don't make some kind of an agreement on the offensive nuclear weapons that both sides have -- and remember, Marvin and Tom, both the United States and the Soviet Union have made very far-reaching proposals, and their numbers aren't that far apart. Yes, they're saying cut back on certain things; we're saying no. But it just seems to me that what could be wasted here at this summit would be a long wrangle over Star Wars and ballistic missile defense, when there are big and very important fish to fry in terms of offensive nuclear weapons.

Is there a way, Tom, in your view, is there a way of avoiding Star Wars? It seems to be at the heart of the issue.

BROKAW: No, I don't think it is avoidable here. However, I think that the whole concept of turning this big apparatus around, which takes a long time, I think that the process will begin here, that this will turn out to be a seminal meeting, that what we'll do here is to begin to understand each other a little more and have a better definition of what we're talking about in terms of what is a defensive system and how do we reduce the offensive weapons that we already have in place.

And John is quite right. When the talk, both sides, now, about limiting the number of nuclear warheads that we have out there, they're only 600 warheads apart. And ultimately, I think that they'll leave here working toward a better definition of those things.

CHANCELLOR: Yeah, but the problem is that one side says, "We want to talk about Star Wars," and the other sides, "We're not going to do any dealing at all with Star Wars." And I guess what we're all saying is, wouldn't it be nice if you could just take Star Wars out of the mix for eight hours and see if you could get some sort of rational negotiation started on these big weapons?

KALB: I have a feeling that it cannot be done, that you cannot remove Star Wars; it's at the heart of the effort.

In any case, we'll be all much smarter in about two-three days.